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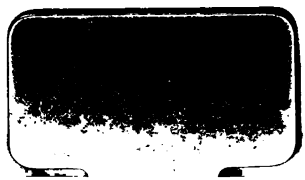

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A. R. CAULFEILD.

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RUSSIAN

AND

SLAVIC POETRY.

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CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES

OF

RUSSIAN AND SLAVIC

POETRY,

WITH SPECIMENS,

TRANSLATED BY ENGLISH AUTHORS.

SELECTED AND PUBLISHED

BY J. S. C. de RADIUS,

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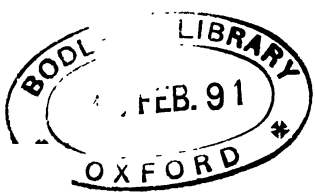
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NOTICE.

THE Fragments of Slavic Poetry herein quoted, are all translated by English authors, and on that account may, it is hoped and desired, be more acceptable to the reader.

The original intention was to enlarge this brief sketch, but then it would have inevitably become encumbered with matters, interesting only to those minutely acquainted with the language and local peculiarities to which it refers.

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FRAGMENTS

OF

SLAVIC POETRY.

To characterize Slavic Poetry as a whole, those shorter songs must be considered which are common to all Slavic tribes, and which alone can be compared to those of other nations; for among the Slavonians, the Servians only, including the Dalmatians, Montenegrins, and Croats, who speak the same language—and indeed among all other modern nations—

they alone possess long popular epics of a heroic character. What of this species still survives among the other Slavic nations, or in any other country of Europe, is only the echo of former times. The Slavic songs have nothing or very little of the bold dramatic character which animates the Scotch, German, and Scandinavian ballads.

A considerable portion, especially of the Russian and Servian songs, begin with a few narrative verses, although the chief part is purely lyric. The following Russian elegy may illustrate the subject.

ELEGY.

O thou field! thou clean and level field!
O thou plain, so far and wide around!
Level field, dressed up with every thing,

Every thing ; with sky-blue flowerets small,
Fresh green grass, and bushes thick with leaves ;
But defaced by one thing, but by one !

For in thy very middle stands a broom,
On the broom a young gray eagle sits,
And he butchers wild a raven black,
Sucks the raven's heart-blood glowing hot,
Drenches with it, too, the moistened earth.
Ah, black raven, youth so good and brave !
Thy destroyer is the eagle gray.

Not a swallow 't is, that hovering clings,
Hovering clings to her warm little nest ;
To the murdered son the mother clings,
And her tears fall like the rushing stream,
And his sister's like the flowing rill ;
Like the dew the tears fall of his love :
When the sun shines, it dries up the dew.

Servian songs begin also frequently with a series of questions, the answers to which form mostly a happy introduction to the tale. For instance :—

What's so white upon yon verdant forest?
Is it snow, or is it swans assembled?
Were it snow, it surely had been melted;
Were it swans, long since they had departed.
Lo! it is not swans, it is not snow, there,
'Tis the tents of Aga, Hassan Agar, etc.

Slavic Ballads, like the Spanish, seldom lay claim to completeness. They do not pretend to give a whole story, but only a scene. If the picture represented has not the dramatic vivacity of the Teutonic nations, it has

the distinctness, the prominent forms, and often the perfection of the best executed bas-reliefs of the ancients. Like the latter, the Slavic Poems seldom represent wild passions or complicated actions; but, by preference, scenes of rest, quietude, and mostly of domestic grief or joy. Such as the following:

JOVO AND MARIA.

'Cross the field a breeze it bore the roses,
Bore them far into the tent of Jovo;
In the tent were Jovo and Maria,
Jovo writing and Maria broidering.
Used has Jovo all his ink and paper,
Used Maria all her burnished gold-thread.
Thus accosted Jovo then Maria;
"O sweet love, my dearest soul, Maria,

Tell me, is my soul then dear unto thee ?
Or my hand find'st thou it hard to rest on ?"
Then with gentle voice replied Maria;
" O, in faith, my heart and soul, my Jovo,
Dearer is to me thy soul, O dearest,
Than my brothers, all the four together :
Softer is thy hand to me to rest on,
Than four cushions, softest of the soft ones.

The high antiquity of Slavic Poetry is manifest among other things in their frequent mythological features. Conversing, thinking, sympathizing animals are very common. The giant Tugarin Dragonson's steed warns him of every danger. The great hero Marko's horse weeps when he feels that the dissolution of his master approaches; nay, life is breathed into inanimate objects of the imagination.

Even the stars and planets sympathize with human beings, and live in constant intercourse with them and their affairs. Stars become messengers; a proud maiden boasts to be more beautiful than the sun; the sun is vexed and is advised to burn her coal-black in revenge. The moon hides herself in the clouds when the great Czar dies. One of the most interesting tales, called "*The Hermitage*," is the fruit of the moon and the morning star's gossiping with each other. It begins thus:—

To the morning star the moon spake chiding;
"Morning star, say where hast thou been wandering?
Where hast thou been wandering & where lingering,
Where hast thou three full white days been
lingering?"

To the moon the morning star has answered;
"I've been wandering, I've three days been lingering,
O'er the white walls of the fortress Belgrade,
Gazing there on strange events and wonders."

The events which the star had witnessed, it now proceeds to relate to the moon.

The deeply-rooted superstitions of the Slavic nations are partly manifest in their songs and tales; they are full of foreboding dreams and omens; witchcraft is practised, and a certain oriental fatalism seems to direct will and destiny. The connection with the other world appears nevertheless much looser than is the case with the Teutonic nations. There is no trace of spirits in Russian ballads, although spectres appear occasionally in Rus-

sian nursery tales, differing, however, from the Teutonic ghosts. In Servian, Bohemian, and Slovakian songs, it occurs frequently that a kind of soothing intercourse is maintained between the living and the departed. The superstition of a certain species of spectres, known as vampyres, chiefly retained in Dalmatia, belongs also here; but nowhere in the whole range of Slavic poetry is that mysterious gloom observable, so peculiar to the world of spirits of the Teutonic north, and which probably is best explained by the conflict between the principles of Christianity and the ruins of paganism. The mind of the Slavic nations, so far as it is manifest in their poetry, seems never to have been perplexed by these contradictions. History shows, that with the exception of those

tribes, who were excited to obstinate opposition by the imprudent zeal of the German converters, the Slavic nations received Christianity with childlike submission, in most cases, principally because their superiors adopted it. Vladimir the Great, to whom the Gospel and the Koran were offered at the same time, was long undecided which to choose, and was at last induced to embrace the former, because "his Russians could not live without the pleasures of drinking."

The veil which covers the forms of the Teutonic world of spirits—the mysterious riddles in which their existence is wrapped, the anxious pensiveness which characterizes them,—all are the result of these endeavours to amalgamate opposing elements. The region of their mysterious existence is approached

not without shuddering; while the few fairies which Slavic poetry and superstition present, animate by the distinctness and freshness of their forms or by their "*espieglerie*" and drollery, and produce the unmingled impression either of the ludicrous or of the wild and fantastic.

Love and heroism, the principal subjects of poetry, are also the most current among the Slavic. But one of their peculiarities is, that these two subjects are kept apart more than among other nations.

There appears no marked difference between the character of Russian and other Slavic native songs, and this remark therefore may apply to the whole race. Russian lovers, who are compelled by circumstances to leave their mistresses, give frequently the

following or similar advice:—

Weep not, weep not, O sweet maid!
Choose, O choose another love!
Is he better, thou'lt forget me;
Is he worse, thou'lt think of me,
Think of me, sweet soul, and weep!

Among those Slavic nations who have lived long in connection with the Teutonic races, the original national manners have of course partly changed, especially among the higher classes. But among the Servians, the old Asiatic custom, according to which a marriage is agreed on by the parents without the knowledge of the parties to be united, is retained in its full extent, and even among

all Slavic nations, strong traces of this custom are observable. Of the Russian songs, many describe lovers taking leave of each other; in another portion, parties thus married, are represented lamenting their unhappy fate.

The following will afford a characteristic specimen of an affecting Russian parting scene, translated by J. G. Percival.

THE FAREWELL.

Brightly shining sunk the waning moon,
And the sun all beautiful arose;
Not a falcon floated through the air,
Strayed a youth along the river's brim.
Slowly strayed he on and dreamingly,
Sighing looked unto the garden green,

Heart all filled with sorrow mused he so:
"All the little birds are now awake,
All embracing with their little wings,
Greeting, all have sung their morning songs.
But, alas! that sweetest doveling mine,
She who was my youth's first dawning love,
In her chamber slumbers fast and deep
Ah! not even her friend is in her dreams,
Ah! no thought of me bedims her soul,
While my heart is torn with wildest grief,
That she comes to meet me here no more."

Stepped the maiden from her chamber then;
Wet, O! wet with tears her lovely face,
All with sadness dimmed her eyes so clear,
Feebly drooping hung her snowy arms.
'T was no arrow that had pierced her heart,
'T was no adder that had stung her so;
Weeping, thus the lovely maid began:

"Fare thee well, beloved, fare thee well,
Dearest soul, thy father's dearest son!
I have been betrothed since yesterday;
Come, to morrow, troops of wedding-guests;
To the altar, I, perforce, must go!
I shall be another's then; and yet
Thine, thine only, thine alone till death."

Maternal tenderness is the subject of many Slavic songs. The affection of a mother being often described by the image of swallows clinging to their own warm nest, or, of tender doves, bereft of their young ones. The rights of a mother are respected with true filial piety, even by the barbarian hero Marko. More remarkable, however, in Slavic poetry, is the peculiar relation of the sister to the brother. The latter are the natural pro-

tectors and supporters of their sisters, and to have no brother is a misfortune. Those who have none, think even of artificial means for procuring one. Thus two sisters, without a brother, make one of white and pink silk wound around a stick of boxwood; and after inserting two brilliant black stones as eyes, two leeches as eyebrows, and two rows of pearls as teeth, offer honey and entreat him to "eat and to speak."

A description of a widow's mourning produces no high idea of conjugal attachment in Servia.

For her husband, she has cut her hair;
For her *brideman* she has torn her face;
For her brother she has plucked her eyes out
Hair she cut, her hair will grow again;

Face she tore, her face will heal again;
But the eyes, they'll never heal again,
Nor the heart, which bleedeth for the brother.

After this attempt to point out the general characteristic features of Slavic Poetry, it is necessary to add a few remarks on the distinguishing traits of the different nations of the Slavic race individually, and here the division in the "eastern and western" will be introduced.

The Russians have very few ballads of high antiquity, and even in this small number hardly one has reference to the heroic prose-tales which are the delight of Russian nurseries. The victories of Peter the First are celebrated in many. The French invasion also, of 1812, which aroused the Russians so

powerfully, gave rise to many patriotic songs, quite in harmony with their singing disposition. They are, like the language, full of caressing epithets and have a peculiar tenderness. A Russian Postillion in a simple song, calls the Tavern, which he never can pass without stopping, his "Matushka," little mother, "Batushka," little father, "Starinka," little oldling. It is translated as nearly as it could be imitated in English.

THE POSTILION.

Tzarish Tavern, thou
Our good motherling,
So invitingly
Standest by the way!
Broad highway, that leads

Down to Petersburg;
Fellows young as I,
As they drive along,
When they pass thee by,
Always will turn in.

Ah, thou bright sun-light,
Red and bright sun-light,
O'er the mountain high,
O'er the forest oaks;
Warm the youngster's heart,
Warm, O warm me, sun;
And not me alone,
But my maiden, too.

Ah, thou maiden dear,
Fairest, dearest maid,
Thou my dearest child,
Art so kind and good!

Black those brows of thine,
Black thy little eyes,
And thy lovely face
All so round and white;
Without painting, white,
Without painting, red!
To thy girdle rolls
Fair and braided hair;
And thy voice is soft,
Full of gentle talk.

Russian lovers are quite inexhaustible in caressing expressions. My "shining moon," "bright sun," "light," "hope," my "white swan," etc. are current terms. Not only "little soul," "little heart" etc., are favourite epithets, but even "little berry" and "little paw" etc. This exquisite tenderness is united

with a deep, pensive feeling, which pervades the whole Russian Poetry. In perfect accord with this melancholy is the Russian national music. The expressive sweetness of the Russian melodies has long been the admiration of foreign composers, but their history is uncertain; no one knows their origin.

To account for the melancholy character of the Russian music and poetry, and to reconcile it with the well known cheerful disposition of the nation, has been attempted by several Russian critics. This pensiveness which pervades the Russian songs, has been considered as a remnant of that gloom, impressed during the two centuries of most cruel oppression of the Mongols. But notwithstanding all the causes of sorrow, the Russians are still the most cheerful and light

hearted nation. It is to love songs principally that the general remark on the pensiveness of Russian airs is applicable.

A PARTING SCENE.

"Sit not up, my love, late at evening hour,
Burn the light no more, light of virgin wax,
Wait no more for me till the midnight hour;
Ah, gone by, gone by is the happy time!
Ah, the wind has blown all our joys away,
And has scattered them o'er the empty field.
For my father dear, he will have it so,
And my mother dear has commanded it,
That I now must wed with another wife,
With another wife, with an unloved one!
But on heaven high two suns never burn,
Two moons never shine in the stilly night;

And an honest lad never loveth twice!
But my father shall be obey'd by me,
And my mother dear I will now obey;
To another wife I'll be wedded soon,
To another wife, to an early death,
To an early death, to a forced one."

Wept the lovely maid many bitter tears,
Many bitter tears, and did speak these words:
"O beloved one, never seen enough,
Longer will I not live in this wide world,
Never without thee, thou my star of hope!
Never has the dove more than one fond mate,
And the female swan ne'er two husbands has,
Neither can I have two beloved friends."

No more sits she now late at evening hour,
But the light still burns, light of virgin wax;
On the table stands the coffin newly made;
In the coffin new lies the lovely maid.

THE DOVE.

On an oak tree sat,
Sat a pair of doves:
And they bill'd and coo'd
And they, heart to heart,
Tenderly embraced
With their little wings;
On them, suddenly,
Darted down a hawk.

One he seized and tore,
Tore the little dove,
With his feather'd feet,
Soft blue little dove;
And he poured his blood

Streaming down the tree,
Feathers too were strew'd
Widely o'er the field;
High away the down
Floated in the air.

Ah! how wept and wept;
Ah! how sobb'd and sobb'd
The poor doveling then
For her little dove.

"Weep not, weep not so,
Tender little bird!"
Spake the light young hawk
To the little dove.
"O'er the sea away,
O'er the far blue sea,

I will drive to thee
Flocks of other doves.
From them choose thee then,
Choose a soft and blue,
With his feathered feet,
Better little dove."

"Fly, thou villain, not,
O'er the far blue sea
Drive not here to me
Flocks of other doves.
Ah! of all thy doves
None can comfort me;
Only he, the father
Of my little ones."

The following elegy is translated from an annual, edited by Baron Delvig.

THE FAITHLESS LOVER.

Nightingale, O Nightingale,
Nightingale so full of song,
Tell me, tell me, where thou fliest,
Where to sing now in the night?
Will another maiden hear thee
Like to me, poor me, all night
Sleepless, restless, comfortless,
Ever full of tears her eyes?
Fly, O fly, dear nightingale,
Over hundred countries fly,
Over the blue sea so far;
Spy the distant countries through,

Town and village, hill and dell,
Whether thou find'st any one,
Who so sad is, as I am?

O, I bore a necklace once,
All of pearls like morning dew;
And I bore a finger-ring,
With a precious stone thereon;
And I bore deep in my heart
Love, a love so warm and true,
When the sad, sad autumn came,
Were the pearls no longer clear;
And in winter burst my ring,
On my finger, of itself!
Ah! and when the spring came on,
Had forgotten me my love.

The subjoined is a more modern heroic ballad, composed, perhaps, by one present at the exploit. The first siege of Azof took place in 1695. The fortress was, however, not taken by storm although repeated assaults were made, but the garrison capitulated in the following year. The great white Czar is of course Peter I.

THE STORMING OF AZOF.

The poor soldiers have no rest,
Neither night nor day!
Late at evening the word was given
To the soldiers gay;
All night long their weapons cleaning,
Were the soldiers good,

Ready in the morning dawn,
All in ranks they stood.

Not a golden trumpet is it,
That now sounds so clear;
Nor the silver flute's tone is it,
That thou now dost hear.
'Tis the great white Tzar who speaketh,
'Tis our father dear.
Come, my princes, my Boyars,
Nobles great and small!
Now consider and invent
Good advice, ye all!
How the soonest, how the quickest,
Fort Azof may fall?

The Boyars, they stood in silence.—
And our father dear,

He again began to speak
In his eye a tear:
Come, my children, good dragoons,
And my soldiers all,
Now consider and invent
Brave advice, ye all,
How the soonest, how the quickest,
Fort Azof may fall?

Like a humming swarm of bees
So the soldiers spake,
With one voice at once they spake:
"Father, dear, great Tzar!
Fall it must! and all our lives
Thereon we gladly stake."

Set already was the moon,
Nearly past the night;

To the storming on they marched,
With the morning light;
To the fort with bulwark'd towers
And walls so strong and white.

Not great rocks they were, which rolled
From the mountains steep;
From the high, high walls there rolled
Foes into the deep.
No white snow shines on the fields,
All so white and bright;
But the corpses of our foes
Shine so bright and white,
Not up-swollen by heavy rains
Left the sea its bed;
No! in rills and rivers, streams
Turkish blood so red.

Different dialects are spoken and different ballads are sung by the inhabitants of Malo-Russia, and in the Polish-Austrian and Polish-Russian provinces—including the fertile steppes of the Ukraine with the two branches of Kozaks — all full of peculiarities. Looking back to the history of these regions, it cannot be doubted that it is the spirit of their past that whispers in their mournful strains.

The following specimens will illustrate their poetry, their warlike spirit as well as their domestic relations, and their power of expressing in lyric strains, their feelings.

ON THE DEATH OF YESSAUL TSHURAÏ.

O eagle, young gray eagle,
Tshuraï thou youth so brave,

In thine own land, the Pole,
The Pole dug thee thy grave!

The Pole dug thee thy grave,
For thee and thy Hetman;
They killed the two young heroes,
Stephen, the valiant Pan.

O eagle, young gray eagle,
Thy brethren are eagles too;
The old ones and the young ones,
Their custom well they knew!

The old ones and the young ones
They are all brave like thee,
An oath they all did take
Avenged shalt thou be!

The old ones and the young ones,
In council grave they meet;

They sit on coal black steeds,
On steeds so brave and fleet.

On steeds so brave and fleet
They are flying, eagle like;
In Polish towns and castles
Like lightning they will strike.

Of steel they carry lances,
Lances so sharp and strong;
With points as sharp as needles,
With hooks so sharp and long.

Of steel they carry sabres,
Two edged, blunted never;
To bring the Pole perdition
For ever and for ever!

* Yessaul is the name of that officer among the Kozaks who ranks immediately after the Hetman, Commander in Chief.

LAMENT FOR YESSAUL PUSHKAR.

There flows a little river,
And Worskla is its name;
And of the little river
Know old and young the fame.

And on the little river
They know good songs to sing;
And on the little river,
They like good thoughts to think.

O thoughts, ye manly thoughts,
Ye call up sorrow and woe;
O thoughts, ye manly thoughts,
From you strong deeds can grow!

Where are you, brave Kozaks?
Where are you, valiant lords?
Your bones are in the grave,
In the deep moor your swords!

Where art thou, O Pushkar?
Where art thou, valiant knight?
Ukraina weeps for thee,
And for her fate so bright.

His bones are in the grave,
Himself with God is now;
O weep, O weep, Ukraina,
An orphan left art thou.

The two succeeding Ruthonian ballads have been selected inasmuch as they illustrate a peculiar popular superstition. The

Leshes are a kind of Satyrs; covered, like them, with hair, and of a very malicious nature. Their presence has a certain benumbing influence; a person whom they visit cannot move or stir; although in the case of the first ballad, as will be seen, that the wine, the mead, etc., had some preparatory influence. The second exhibits the whole plaintive mood of a Russian loving maid, and may be considered as a characteristic specimen.

SIR SAVA AND THE LESHES.

With the Lord at Nemirov
Sir Sava dined so gladly;
Nor thought he that his life
Would end so soon and sadly

Sir Sava he rode home
To his own court with speed;
And plenty of good oats
He bids to give his steed.

Sir Sava behind his table
To write with care begun;
His young wife she is rocking
In the cradle her infant son.

'Holla! my lad, brisk butler,
Bring now the brandy to me;
My well-beloved lady,
This glass I drink to thee.

'Holla! my lad, brisk butler,
Now bring me the clear wine;
This glass and this, I drink it
To this dear son of mine.

'Holla! my lad, brisk butler,
Now bring me the mead so fast;
My head aches sore; I fear
I've rode and drunk my last!'

Who knocks, who storms so fiercely?
Sir Sava looks up to know;
The Leshes stand before him,
And quick accost him so:

'We bow to thee, Sir Sava,
How far'st thou, tell us now?
To thy guests from the Ukraina,
What welcome biddest thou?'

'What could I bid you, brethren,
To-day in welcome's stead?
Well know I, ye are come
To take my poor sick head!'

'And tell us first, Sir Sava,
Where are thy daughters fair?'
'They are stolen by the Leshes,
And wash their linen there.'

'Now to the fight be ready!
Sir Sava meet thy lot!
Thy head is lost! one moment,
Death meets thee on the spot.'

The sabre whizzes through the air
Like wild bees in the wood;
The young wife of Sir Sava
By him a widow stood!

THE ENAMOURED GIRL.

Winds are blowing, howling,
  Trees are bending low;
O my heart is aching,
  Tears in streams do flow.

Years I count with sorrow,
  And no end appears;
But my heart is lighten'd,
  When I'm shedding tears.

Tears the heart can lighten,
  Happy make it not;
E'en one blissful moment
  Ne'er can be forgot.

Some there are who envy
E'en my destiny;
Say, 'O happy flow'ret
Blooming on the lea.'

On the lea so sandy,
Sunny, wanting dew!
O without my lover
Life is dark to view.

Naught can please without him,
Seems the world a jail;
Happiness exists not,
Peace of mind doth fail.

Where, dark-browed belov'd one,
Where, O may'st thou be?
Come and see, astonished,
How I weep for thee!

Whom shall I now lean on,
Whose caress receive?
Now that he who loves me
Far away doth live?

I would fly to thee, love,
But no wings have I;
Withered, parch'd, without thee,
Every hour I die.

The following little elegy was heard and written down in Galicia:—

THE LASTING LOVE.

White art thou, my maiden,
Can'st not whiter be!
Warm my love is, maiden,
Cannot warmer be!

But when dead, my maiden,
White was she still more;
And, poor lad, I love her,
Warmer than before.

Of still greater importance in respect to the present subject are the *Servians*. It has been mentioned that the inhabitants of the Turkish provinces of Servia and Bosnia, of Montenegro, of the Austrian Kingdom of Slavonia, of Dalmatia, and military Crotia, speak essentially the same language; which is likewise the dialect of numerous Servian settlements in Hungary, along the south-western shore of the Danube. The inexhaustible source of Servian Poetry belongs then to the whole nation, but most abundant it is in Turkish Servia, Bosnia, and Montenegro, where modern civilization has least

penetrated, and where the vernacular language is spoken with the greatest purity.

The Poetry of the Servians is most intimately interwoven with their daily life. It is the picture of their thoughts, feelings, and actions. The distinction between Servian and other Slavic songs principally rests in the cheerfulness which is the fundamental element of Servian Poetry, and in a serenity bright and transparent as the blue southern sky. The allusions to mishaps in married life, or to the increasing cares of the household, and other domestic and family relations, sometimes disturb the otherwise unchangeable serenity of the Servian fair sex, and call forth gentle lamentations. Amongst the ancient songs, recited on certain stated occasions, the wedding songs, adapted to all the

various ceremonies of Slavic marriage, are the most remarkable; and here a singular contradiction is met with. While all the symbolic ceremonies strongly indicate the state of humiliation, to which the institution of marriage subjects the Slavic maidens, the songs, the mental reproductions of these coarse acts, are delicate, and almost gallant. They must be derived from a very early period, as they have no allusion, like the Russian, to Church ceremonies.

PARTING LOVERS.

To white Buda, to white castled Buda
Clings the vine-tree, cling the vine-tree branches;
Not the vine-tree is it with its branches,
No, it is a pair of faithful lovers.
From their early youth they were betrothed,
Now they are compelled to part untimely;

One addressed the other at their parting:
"Go, my dearest soul, and go straight forward,
Thou wilt find a hedge-surrounded garden,
Thou wilt find a rose-bush in the garden,
Pluck a little branch off from the rose-bush,
Place it on thy heart, within thy bosom;
Even as that red rose will be fading,
Even so, love, will my heart be fading."
And the other love this answer gave then:
"Thou, dear soul, go back a few short paces,
Thou wilt find, my love, a verdant forest,
In the forest stands a cooling fountain,
In the fountain lies a block of marble;
On the marble stands a golden goblet,
In the goblet thou wilt find a snowball.
Dearest, take that snowball from the goblet,
Lay it on thy heart within thy bosom;
Even as the snowball will be melting,
Even so, love, will my heart be melting."

RENDEZVOUS.

Sweetheart, come, and let us kiss each other
But, O tell me, where shall be our meeting?
In thy garden, love, or in my garden?
Under thine or under mine own rose-trees?
Thou, sweet soul, become thyself a rose-bud,
I then to a butterfly will change me;
Fluttering I will drop upon the rose-bud;
Folks will think I'm hanging on a flower,
While a lovely maiden I am kissing!

ST. GEORGE'S DAY.

To St. George's day the maiden prayed;
"Com'st thou again, O dear St. George's day!
Find me not here, by my mother dear,
Or be it wed, or be it dead!—
But rather than dead, I would be wed!"

But not all similar songs exhibit the same tenderness, and from the following it will appear that their usual gentleness and humility, does not always prevent these oppressed beings from taking the lead in domestic affairs:—

HOUSEHOLD MATTERS.

Come, companion, let us hurry
That we may be early home,
For my mother-in-law is cross.
Only yestreen she accused me,
Said that I had beat my husband;
When, poor soul, I had not touched him.
Only bid him wash the dishes;
And he would not wash the dishes;
Threw then at his head the pitcher,
Knocked a hole in head and pitcher;

For the head I do not care much;
But I care much for the pitcher,
As I paid for it right dearly;
Paid for it with one wild apple,
Yes, and half a one besides.

In their heroic poems, the Servians offer still higher objects of admiration; they stand in this respect quite isolated, and when representing their country-men in combat with their mortal enemies and oppressors, they display a generosity which is incomparable. A tale commences thus:—

What's that cry of anguish from Banyani?
Is't the Vila? is't the hateful serpent?
Were't the Vila, she were on the summit;

Were't the serpent, it were 'neath the mountain.
Not the Vila is it, nor a serpent;
Shrieked in anguish thus Perovitch Batritch
In the hands of Osman, son of Tchorov.

Ravens are the messengers of unhappy news. The battle of Mishar begins with the following verses:—

Flying came a pair of coal-black ravens
Far away from the broad field of Mishar,
Far from Shabatz, from the high white fortress;
Bloody were their beaks unto the eyelids,
Bloody were their talons to the ankles;
And they flew along the fertile Matshva,
Waded quickly through the billowy Drina,
Journey'd onward through the honoured Bosnia,

Lighting down upon the hateful border,
'Midst within the accursed town of Vakup,
On the dwelling of the captain Kulin;
Lighting down and croaking as they lighted.

Three or four poems, relating to courtship or weddings, begin with a description of the beauty of the bride:—

Never since the world had its beginning,
Never did a lovelier flow'ret blossom,
Than the flow'ret in our own days blooming;
Haikuna, the lovely maiden flower.

She was lovely, nothing e'er was lovelier!
She was tall and slender as the pine-tree;
White her cheeks, but tinged with rosy blushes,
As if morning's beam had shone upon them,

Till that beam had reached its high meridian.
And her eyes, they were two precious jewels,
And her eyebrows, leeches from the ocean,
And her eyelids they were wings of swallows;
And her flaxen braids were silken tassels;
And her sweet mouth was a sugar casket,
And her teeth were pearls arrayed in order;
White her bosom, like two snowy dovelets,
And her voice was like the dovelet's cooing;
And her smiles were like the glowing sunshine;
And her fame, the story of her beauty,
Spread through Bosnia and through Herz'govina.

In respect to style, Slavic Poetry in general has none of the coarseness which sometimes disfigures the ballads of other nations; yet, dignity of style cannot be expected in any popular production.

The number and variety of Slavic heroic poems is immense, and the pictures which they exhibit are extremely wild and bold, and are often drawn on a mythological ground; indeed, both the epic and lyric poetry of the Servians are interwoven with a traditional belief in certain fanciful creatures of pagan superstition, which exercise a constant influence on human affairs. The principal figure is the Vila, a mountain fairy, being nearly of the same character as the northern spirits; the malicious qualities predominate, and her intermeddling is, in most cases, fatal.

The more modern heroic poems of the Servians are, essentially, of the same character as their traditional ballads, devoted to a variety of subjects, public and private. Duels, love affairs, domestic quarrels and re-

conciliations, are alternately related, and the variety of invention in these tales, the skill of the combinations, and final denouement, surpass all what is known of similar productions. It remains to observe, that while in all the other Slavic Poetry the musical element is predominant, it is in the Servian entirely secondary.

The *Bulgarian* poems, in spite of the influence of the language of numerous nations, are not distinguished in any way from the Servian. One specimen will be sufficient.

THE SLAVE GANGS.

O thou hill, thou high green hill!
Why, green hill, art thou so withered?
Why so withered and so wilted?

Did the winter's frost so wilt thee?
Did the summer's heat so parch thee?
Not the winter's frost did wilt me,
Nor the summer's heat did parch me,
But my glowing heart is smothered.
Yesterday three slave gangs crossed me;
Grecian maids were in the first row,
Weeping, crying bitterly:
"O our wealth! art lost for ever!"
Black-eyed maidens from Walachia
Weeping, crying in the second:
"O ye ducats of Walachia!"
Bulgar women in the third row,
Weeping, crying, "O sweet home!
O sweet home! beloved children!
Fare ye well, farewell for ever!"

The *Slovanzi*, or Slavic inhabitants of Carniola and Carinthia, have of course their own poems, in which, however, the influence of the German is discernible, and chiefly in their melodies, which are said to be the same as amongst the German mountaineers of Styria and the Tyrol. They are too long to be given here, the following brief specimen, therefore, has been selected.

THE DOVELET.

"Where were you, and where have you stray'd
In the night?
Yours shoes are all with dew o'erlaid;
In the night, in the night."

I strayed there in the cool green grove,
In the night.
There flutters many a turtle dove,
In the night, in the night.

They have such little red cheeks, they all
In the night;
And bills so sweet, and bills so small,
In the night, in the night.

There I stood, lurking on the watch,
In the night;
Till one little dovelet I did catch,
In the night, in the night.

It had of all the sweetest bill,
In the night;
Red rose, its cheeks were redder still,
In the night, in the night.

That dovelet now caresses me
In the night;
And kissing each other we'll ever be,
In the night, in the night.

It appears that five centuries ago, the Bohemians had exactly the same kind of national poetry, and what is rather surprising, that the same whieh were recited or sung in Bohemia in the thirteenth century, are now heard and sung in Russia and Servia. The subjoined may serve as illustrating comparisons, and belong to the western branch.

ANCIENT BOHEMIAN SONGS.

I.

O my rose, my fair red rose,
Why art thou blown out so early?

Why, when blown out, frozen?
Why, when frozen, withered?
Withered, broken from the stem!

Late at night I sat and sat,
Sat until the cocks did crow;
No one came, although I waited
Till the pine-torch all burned low.

Then came slumber over me;
And I dreamed my golden ring
Sudden slipp'd from my right hand;
Down my precious diamond fell.
For the ring I looked in vain,
For my love I looked in vain!

II.

O, ye forests, dark green forests,
Miletinish forests!

Why in summer and in winter,
Are ye green and blooming?
O! I would not weep and cry,
Nor torment my heart.
But now tell me, good folks, tell me,
How should I not cry?
Ah! where is my dear good father?
Wo! he deep lies buried.
Where my mother? O good mother!
O'er her grows the grass!
Brothers have I not, nor sisters,
And my lad is gone!

SERVIAN SONG.

O my fountain, so fresh and cool,
O my rose, so rosy red!
Why art thou blown out so early?
None have I to pluck thee for!

If I plucked thee for my mother,
Ah! poor girl, I have no mother;
If I plucked thee for my sister,
Gone is my sister with her husband;
If I plucked thee for my brother,
To the war my brother's gone.
If I plucked thee for my lover,
Gone is my love so far away!
Far away o'er three green mountains,
Far away o'er three cool fountains!

PASSAGES FROM SEVERAL RUSSIAN BALLADS.

current at the present day.

I.

Last evening I sat, a young maid,
I sat till deep in the night;
I sat and waited till day-break,

Till all my pine-torch was burnt out.
While all my companions slept,
I sat and waited for thee, love!

II.

No good luck to me my dream forebodes;
For to me, to me, fair maid, it seemed,
On my right hand did my gold ring burst,
O'er the floor then rolled the precious stone.

During the thirty years' war, of which Bohemia was in part almost uninterruptedly the seat, a complete change of manners, institutions and localities took place. Whole villages became deserted, and most of the ancient songs must have perished, besides the German influence increased rapidly.

The following specimens of songs still current in Bohemia, will show the harmless and playful spirit which pervades them.

THE FORSAKEN MAIDEN.

Little star with gloomy shine,
If thou couldst but cry!
If thou hadst a heart, my star
Sparks would from thee fly,
Just as tears fall from mine eye.

All the night with golden sparks
Thou wouldst for me cry!
Since my love intends to wed,
Only 'cause another maid
Richer is than I.

LIBERAL PAY.

Flowing waters meet each other,
And the winds, they blow and blow;
Sweetheart with her bright blue eyes
Stands and looks from her window.

Do not stand so at the window,
Rather come before the door;
If thou giv'st me two sweet kisses,
I will give thee ten and more.

The *Slovaks*.— Slavic inhabitants of the north-western districts of Hungary—are considered as the direct descendants from the first Slavic settlers in Europe, and although for nearly more than a thousand years forming

part of the Hungarian Nation, have preserved their language and many of their ancient customs. The Slovaks are said to possess still, many pretty and artless songs, both pensive and cheerful; but the original type appears now much effaced, as the surrounding nations, and especially the Germans, have exercised a decided and lasting influence upon them.

The following are still heard among the Slovaks:—

THE MOTHER'S CURSE.

The maiden went for water,
To the well o'er the meadow away;
She there could draw no water,
So thick the frost it lay.

The mother she grew angry;
She had it long to bemoan;
"O daughter mine, O daughter,
I would thou wert a stone!"

The maiden's water-pitcher
Grew marble instantly;
And she herself, the maiden,
Became a maple tree.

There came one day two lads,
Two minstrels young they were;
"We've travelled far, my brother,
Such a maple we saw no where.

"Come let us cut a fiddle,
One fiddle for me and you;
And from the same fine maple,
For each one, fiddlesticks two."

They cut into the maple,—
  There splashed the blood so red;
The lads fell on the ground,
  So sore were they afraid.

Then spake from within the maiden:
  "Wherefore afraid are you?
Cut out for me one fiddle,
  And for each one, fiddlesticks two.

"Then go and play right sadly,
  To my mother's door begone,
And sing: Here is thy daughter,
  Whom thou didst curse to stone."

The lads they went, and sadly
  Their song to play began;
The mother, when she heard them,
  Right to the window ran;

"O lads, dear lads, be silent,
Do not my pain increase;
For since I lost my daughter,
My pain doth never cease!"

SUN AND MOON.

Ah! but this evening
Would come my lover sweet,
With the bright, bright sun,
Then the moon would meet.

Ah! poor girl this evening
Comes not thy lover sweet;
With the bright, bright sun,
The moon doth never meet.

Of all the Slavic nations the *Poles* had most neglected their national poetry, and

the neglect may easily be explained in a nation among whom all that had reference to boors or bondsmen, was regarded with the utmost indifference. Their beautiful national dances, however, the pompous and graceful Polonaise, the bold Mazur, the charming Cracovienne, are unique.

Many of the more ancient ballads among the Poles are also met with in some of the western languages. For example, the subjoined, which would indicate that it is derived from a time when the invasions of the Tartars were still distinctly remembered.

THE INVASION OF THE TARTARS.

Plundering are the Tartars,
Plundering Jashdow castle.

All the people fled,
Only a lad they met.

"Where's thy lord, my lad?
Where and in what tower
Is thy lady's bower?"

"I must not betray him,
Lest my lord should slay me."

"Not his anger fear,
Thou shalt stay not here,
Thou shalt go with us."

"My lord's and lady's bower
Is in the highest tower."

Once the Tartars shot,
And they hit them not.

Twice the Tartars shot,
And they killed the lord.

Thrice the Tartars shot—
They are breaking in the tower
The lady is in their power.

Away, away it goes,
Over the green meadows,
Black, black the walls arose!

"O lady, O turn back
To thy walls so sad and black.

"O walls, ye dreary walls!
So sad and black are you,
Because your lord they slew!

"Because your lord is slain,
Your lady is dragged away
Into captivity!
A slave for life to be,
Far, far in Tartary!"

In the *Lusatian* national ballads least of that pure feeling is discernible, which is in general characteristic of Slavic love-songs. The following are two ballads translated from the Upper-Lusatian language.

THE ORPHAN'S LAMENT.

Far more unhappy in the world am I,
Than on the meadow the bird that doth fly.

Little bird merrily flits to and fro,
Sings its sweet carol upon the green bough.

I, alas, wander wherever I will,
Every where I am desolate still!

No one befriends me, wherever I go,
But my own heart full of sorrow and woe!

Cease thy grief, oh my heart, full of grief,
Soon will a time come that giveth thee relief.

Never misfortune has struck me so hard,
But I ere long again better have fared.

God of all else in the world has enough;
Why not then widows and orphans enough?

GOOD ADVICE.

Let him who would married be,
Look about him and take care,

That he does not take a wife,
Take a wife;
He'll repent it all his life.

If thou shouldst make up thy mind,
And shouldst take too young a wife,
Youthful wife has boiling blood,
Boiling blood;
No one thinks of her much good.

If thou shouldst make up thy mind,
And shouldst take too old a wife,
In the house she'll creep about,
Creep about;
And will frighten people out.

If thou shouldst make up thy mind,
And shouldst take a handsome wife,

Nought but trouble she will give,
Trouble give;
Others' visits she'll receive.

If thou shouldst make up thy mind,
And shouldst take too short a wife,
Lowly thou must stoop to her,
Stoop to her,
Wouldst thou whisper in her ear.

If thou shouldst make up thy mind,
And shouldst take too tall a wife,
Ladders thou to her must raise,
Ladders raise,
If thou wouldst thy wife embrace.

If thou shouldst make up thy mind,
And shouldst take a snarling wife,

Thou wilt want no dog in the house,
Dog in the house;
Thy wife will be the dog in the house,

As for poor ones, let them be,
Nothing they will bring to thee,
Every thing will wanting be,
Wanting be;
Not a soul will come to thee.

If thou shouldst make up thy mind,
And shouldst take a wealthy wife,
Then with patience thou must bear,
Thou must bear,
If the breeches she should wear.

Pretty, modest, smart, and neat,
Good and pious she must be;

If thou weddest such a wife,
Such a wife,
Thou'lt not repent it all thy life.

Merry poems like these, are usually sung at wedding feasts, where several of the old Slavic ceremonies are still preserved; among other things, the conducting home of the bride in solemn procession. Many old verses, familiar to their ancestors, are in like manner occasionally recited. But the poetical atmosphere which still weaves around the Russian and Servian maidens a veil of mystery—through which she gazes, as in a dream full of charming illusions and images, into that condition of new existence

feared and desired at once—that atmosphere is more or less destroyed by the glimmer of the surrounding civilization.

FINIS.

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